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A
FUNERAL SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE INTERMENT

OF

MRS. FRINSHAM,

AT SHOTTESBROOK, IN THE COUNTY OF

BERKS.

ON JANUARY 17, 1797.

BY THE REV. CHARLES WHITE,

CURATE OF CHERTSEY, SURREY.

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1797.

FRYER'S SERMON

PREACHED AT THE GREAT CHURCH

ON THE 14TH DAY OF

THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 1741

BY THE REV. FRYER



PRINTED BY J. DODD

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

AT THE SIGN OF THE

WINDMILL, IN ST. MARK'S LANE

1741

1741

TO
MRS. GEORGE BERKELEY,

RELICT OF THE REV. DR. BERKELEY,

PREBENDARY OF CANTERBURY;

THIS SERMON,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED AT HER REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED;

BY HER

OBEDIENT AND MUCH OBLIGED SERVANT,

CHARLES WHITE.

Chertsey, Feb. 16, 1797.



S E R M O N, &c.

1 THESSALONIANS, CHAP. iv. VER. 14.

IF WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED, AND ROSE
AGAIN, EVEN SO THEM ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN
JESUS WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM.

ON the present occasion it will by no means
be necessary to enter upon a nice explanation of
words, or into any particular disquisition respect-
ing the doctrinal parts of the text. And indeed
it appears more suited to the short limits of a
single discourse, and more agreeable to the pur-
pose of my present appearance in this place, to
enter immediately upon those leading, plain, and
awful considerations, which are contained in the
text; and which the present solemnity renders
more than commonly interesting.

For, when we surround the breathless remains of our fellow-creatures, and stand by the open sepulchres of departed friends, it appears impossible to lose sight of our own mortality: and, with this in view, we cannot be altogether without some alarming forebodings of "something after death; that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns."

But if, under these impressions, we open our Bibles, we there discover light and immortality brought to light through the Gospel;—we there find that our dear friends and relations, who have been laid unto their fathers in the silent tomb, are only fallen asleep, and that the hour is shortly coming, "in which all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." When presented with considerations of such infinite importance, and when these considerations are pressed upon our attention in the persuasive manner they now are, by the solemn spectacle before us,—our hearts must be gross, our ears must be dull of hearing, and our eyes must be closed indeed, if we are not roused up to the serious consideration of our latter end, and of that everlasting and unchangeable situation of
inexpressible

inexpressible happiness, or of unspeakable misery, which awaits every soul here present, in the eternal world beyond the grave.

To men unaccustomed to such serious reflections, these admonitions may perhaps be unwelcome; and the love of present ease may tempt them to put off the consideration to a more convenient season; but we beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God to reflect—reflect seriously, that your everlasting happiness is at stake. We are all standing upon the borders of the grave; no age is exempt from death; we must all, ere long, quit the present scene;—and, whether we think of it or not, “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, according to that we have done, whether it be good or bad.”

As long then as you remain inconsiderate and unresolved with respect to the things which belong to your everlasting peace, so long you remain in circumstances of extreme danger: but, if you once begin to think seriously, and are determined to examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith of Christ, rest assured that you have no reason to dread the enquiry. For, if you have already begun to live to the glory of God here, as those who hope to shine forth in his glorious presence

presence hereafter, the examination will at once dissipate every fear, and produce the most rational, the most solid delight. It will at once alleviate the unavoidable evils of life, and give an additional relish to every present enjoyment. And, on the other hand, even should you find that you have been trifling away your time with the ignorant and foolish who know not God, and have not yet begun the work of your salvation, still you have no cause to despair of mercy, nor to be afraid of knowing the very worst of your situation.

“ The Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save, nor his ear heavy that he cannot hear.” That you are still alive, and that at length you have been taught to consider your ways, is of itself a sufficient proof of his designs of mercy towards you ;—and, if you wish for proofs more convincing, hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith to all who truly turn to him : “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Hear also what St. Paul saith : “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Hear also what St. John saith : “ If any man sin, we have an ad-
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vocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins."

"Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Remember that sin is the fruitful, fatal, cause of all the troubles man is born to suffer here, and of all the miseries impenitent, unbelieving, sinners must suffer hereafter. Accept then, with the most lively gratitude, accept the deliverance which the Gospel freely offers.

It is true, from the corrupt bias of our fallen nature, vice has its pleasures; and, from our natural disaffection to every thing truly good and excellent, virtue too often appears without form and comeliness.—But, if we calculate how short our time here below really is, (and on an

occasion like the present it seems wholly impossible to avoid this calculation;) if we take a serious view of our present conduct in connection with eternity, and consider with any tolerable degree of attention the unchangeable nature, and the certain consequence, of vice and virtue,—the scales will then fall from our eyes, and we shall clearly see that the path of sin is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death; but that the ways of holiness are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

For, when we come to die—when we are about to take an eternal farewell of every thing here below—when that solemn hour arrives in which soul and body must part,—what consolation can sin afford—or rather, with what dreadful horrors must, at a moment like this, the reflection on a life wasted in wickedness fill the mind?—On the contrary, how happily different—(it is a faint expression, nor does language afford a word sufficiently strong)—how blessedly different the state of those who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel!—who foreseeing, are neither surprized by, nor unprepared for, the approach of death;—who with calmness can look up and say, “I know whom I have believed,”—with confidence look forward and exclaim, “I am persuaded that he is able to keep
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that which I have committed unto him ;"—and with satisfaction look back on those fruits of righteousness, which follow after justification by faith only, and as it were justify our faith before men, as our faith justifies us before God ; and which, as preparatives for the enjoyments of heaven, into which nothing that is unholy can ever enter, are sure and certain pledges of the inheritance prepared for the saints in light.

It might weaken the serious impression which it is my grand object to make, were I to divert your attention from the interesting considerations now before us, by any particular detail respecting the character of our departed Sister. And, if saints in heaven have any knowledge of what is transacting here on earth, it would grieve—if with propriety the expression can be admitted—it would grieve her blessed spirit, to behold your concern withdrawn, even for a single moment, from the care of your own souls, to gaze, with whatever admiration, on one whose fate is now for ever fixed. But it appears well suited to my present purpose just to observe, that she died, as I have good reason to believe she lived, a *real Christian*. And indeed, as so immediately connected with the only sure foundation upon which we can safely rest for present comfort or future happiness, it is here worthy particular remark, that,

that, though she had served her generation according to the will of God;—though she was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did, her hope of acceptance in the sight of God was derived from a different source—the merit of the Saviour's blood.

Devotion to God is the brightest jewel which adorns the Christian's character. In this also she peculiarly excelled. For notwithstanding she had long been bowed down by weakness and infirmity of body, no consideration, not even the severest weather, could keep her from the house of God, whenever her health would any way permit her to attend. Yet so firmly was she rooted and grounded in this first, this grand, this essential, this all-important principle of faith in the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer, that she accounted all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. On the bare mention therefore of those good works, in which by grace she was enabled to abound, and which, as is expressed in one of the truly scriptural articles of our excellent Church, "are the fruits of faith, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch as by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit:"—on the bare mention of these

these things, as comfortable evidences of her union with the *Lord our Righteousness*, in the course of the last week of her painful illness, she vehemently disclaimed all confidence in the flesh, and most earnestly prayed that she might at the last "be found in Christ, not having her own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Kept by divine power she staggered not through unbelief, but continued to the last moment strong in this faith, and expired giving glory to God in these words—the last she ever uttered: "O my God and Saviour, into thy hands do I commend my spirit!"

And now, my brethren, that our latter end may be equally happy and blessed; and that whenever we shall depart this life we may sleep in Jesus, as our hope is this our sister doth,—let us pass the time of our sojourning here in fear; and, as long as we remain in the flesh, let us live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Sin hath introduced into the world all the misery which we either feel, behold, or apprehend. And as, from the eternal and unchangeable nature
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of vice and virtue, we must be holy before we can be happy, let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, perfecting holiness in the fear of God:—"for without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

It is true, and indeed it is a truth of such magnitude that we should never for a single moment lose sight of it, that, if we have been buried with Christ in baptism, and are actually risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, we shall seek for peace, and rest for salvation,—for complete deliverance from sin and sorrow, for unfading glory and endless joys,—in and through the merits and intercession, the blood and righteousness of the divine Jesus.

And in the near views of death, and the prospect of the eternal world, in which we shall be for ever beyond expression or conception happy or miserable,—it is undoubtedly a most glorious privilege to open our Bibles, and to be enabled by faith to apply these precious scriptures personally to ourselves,—“God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places: that in the ages to
come

come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ. For by grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

To be enabled, by a living faith in the merits of the ever blessed Redeemer, to apply these precious scriptures personally to ourselves is undoubtedly an inestimable, an infinite privilege: but should we be tempted to stop here, without trying the spirit whether it be of God—without examining the nature of our faith by its fruits—we may be assured that we are under a strong delusion. For, if we are reconciled to God through faith in the blood and righteousness of his Son, we are at the same time "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

And, though we are saved by a scheme of salvation, which does not allow us to mention any works of our own, as if we had whereof to glory before God,—yet at the same time the Gospel of Grace will always be found in its effects a doctrine according to godliness. For let it ever be remembered, that holiness of heart and life is indispensable to our happiness; and the only sure
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and safe sign of a saving faith in the merits of the divine Jesus, which can be depended upon.

It is true, of ourselves we are incapable of doing works pleasant and acceptable to God; but the question is, not what *unassisted* we can perform, but, as *enabled* by that divine grace so freely offered, and so certainly communicated to those that ask.

And blessed, for ever blessed be God, *we* are not required to make brick without straw; but graciously furnished with every assistance necessary to perfect holiness in the fear of God. And when, as essential to our happiness, we are commanded to work out our own salvation—to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,—and, having been taught how we ought to walk and to please God, to abound more and more in every good word and work,—we are at the same time graciously assured that God is able, and not only able, but also ready, whenever we call upon him, to make all grace abound towards us. And finally, to remove every doubt from our minds, and that our joy may be full, we are further assured that, if we are real Christians, we shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time; and that, if, during our pilgrimage

pilgrimage here below, we are persuaded of the truth of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and embrace the promises of the Gospel, *we shall never die*: for, when the time of our departure out of this world arrives, we shall *sleep* in Jesus; and when Christ, who is *our life*, shall appear in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.

And, if we do indeed assuredly believe these revealed, these animating truths, what a blessed train of consequences will they draw after them! For, whatever through present infirmity might be our feelings when we first entered this place to perform the funeral rites of our departed Sister, that sleep, which we more commonly call death, can now no longer appear a dreadful, but a pleasing thought.

In the nervous language of a late elegant and pious writer—"One would think that to man, who lives all his life long in bondage, for fear of death, it should be a surprizing delight to see death lie gasping at his feet, naked and impotent, without sting, without terror;—one would think that to man, who lives rather by hope than enjoyment, it should not be necessary to prove, that the Christian's hope, whose confidence is greater,
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its object more glorious, and its success more certain, than that of any worldly fancy or project, is full of pleasure:—and finally, one would think that it must be a delightful prospect to see the heavens opened, and Jesus, our Jesus—our Prince, our Saviour, sitting at the right hand of God.”*

Let us then conclude in the triumphant expressions of the Apostle:—“ O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?—the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

AMEN.

* Dr. Lucas's Inquiry after Happiness.



FINIS.

